



The Nature Conservancy's efforts in support of *C. cactorum* outreach, research, and government relations activities

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The Nature Conservancy
International *Cactoblastis*
cactorum Conference

Phoenix, AZ

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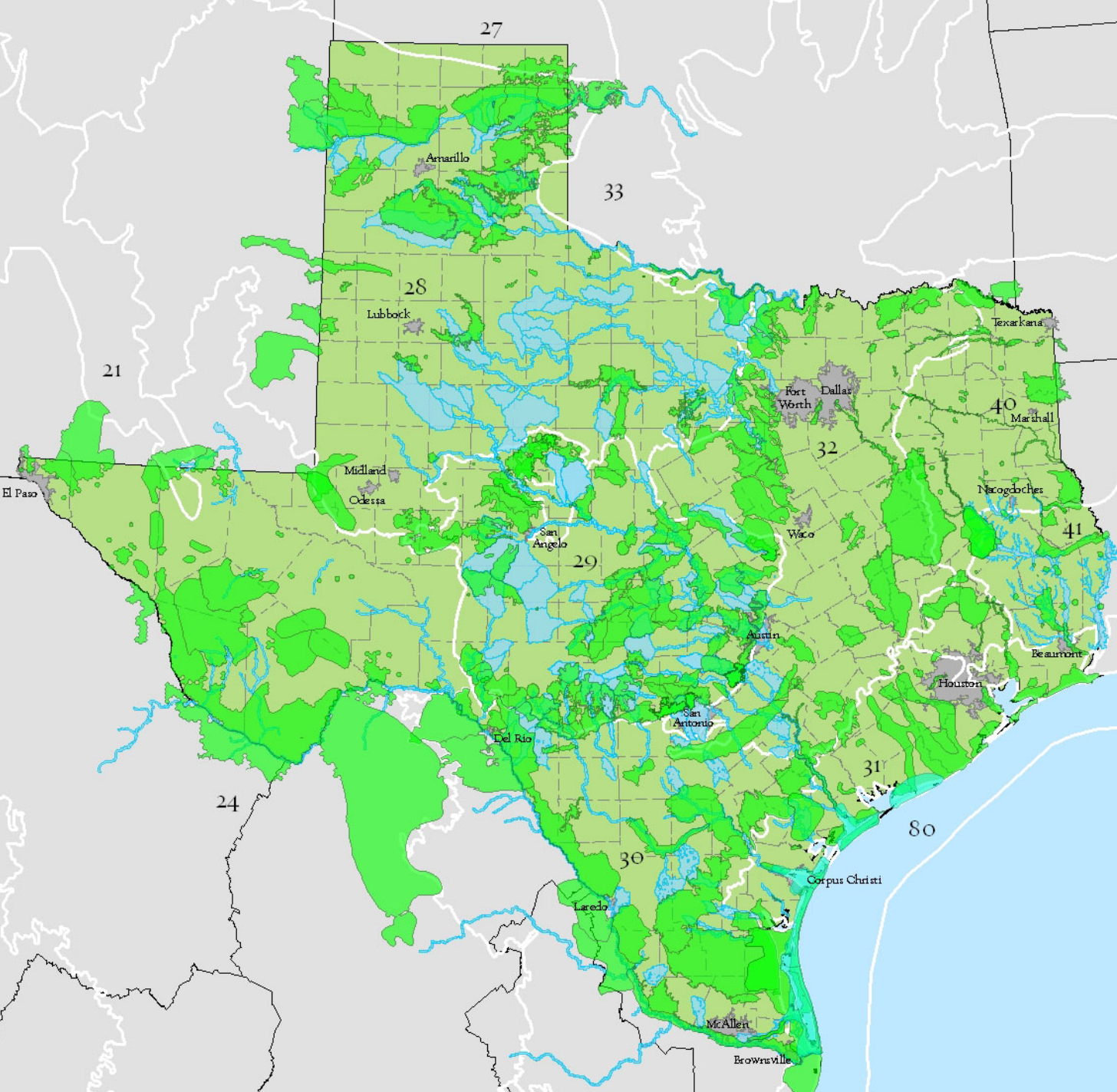




Presentation Contents

- Threat to Texas biodiversity
- Support of early detection/rapid response strategies
- Education and outreach
- Government relations
- Bi-National focus

Texas Conservation Blueprint





Texas Cactoblastis Nightmare

“He said that he has 200 acres of land near Laredo that is badly infested with cacti including a prickly pear. He said that he contacted the Texas Department of Agriculture about getting a permit to import Cactoblastis infested prickly pear cactus to Texas from Florida for the control of pest cacti.”

May 2004

TEXAS AND OPUNTIA

- Prickly pear is a mixed blessing on Texas rangelands with about as many ranches seeking to control it (16%) as utilize it for cattle feed (18%) (Hanselka et al., 1991).
- Opuntia is considered to have positive values for livestock production in 60% of the counties and to have positive values for wildlife production in 80% of the counties of the State according to a 1981 survey (Lundgren et al. 1981).





“If *Cactoblastis cactorum* gets into South Texas, it will produce an ecological cascade that will severely impact many species of wildlife. Curve-billed thrashers, for example, would likely disappear.”

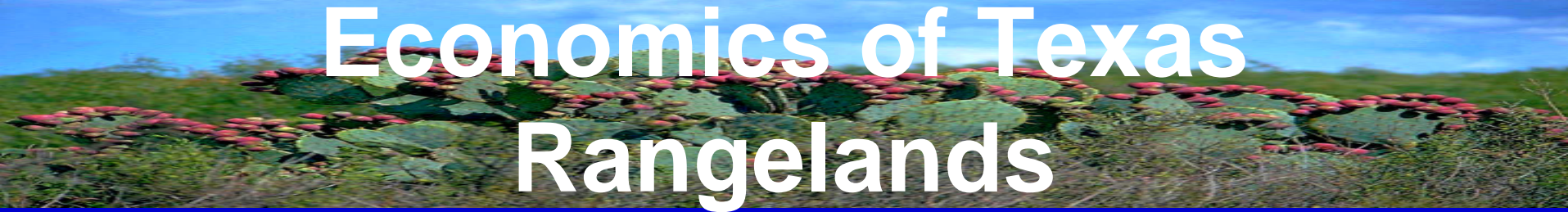
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SOUTH TEXAS WILDLIFE RESEARCH

Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute



Photos from Dave Hewitt, CKWRI



Economics of Texas Rangelands

- Market value analysis has documented that for some counties in Texas over 80% of the land value is derived from recreational hunting value.
- Birders and other nature tourists generate at least \$125 million and 2,500 jobs a year. Rare species, which draw birders from around the country (and often the world), can contribute \$100,000 apiece to the local economy
- \$1.5 billion spent on hunting each year in Texas; \$77.6 million received by Texas landowners each year from leases



Land, Ranching and Wildlife in Texas

"True ranchers are being forced more into New Mexico and to those places that have a lot of government lease land. Recreational buyers in Texas have just driven these land prices up to the point that the economics won't work for a cattle producer. On a lot of these ranches today, the lease income from hunting is as much or more than the income from cattle grazing."



Media Placement to support Outreach and Education

State plant imperiled by moth

Web Posted: 12/20/2006 10:27 PM CST

Anton Caputo
San Antonio Express-News

It's hard to imagine that something as rugged and plentiful as Texas prickly pear could be in peril. But an invader is converging on the Lone Star State from two fronts. The voracious cactus moth is headed our way from the east and the south, with some experts warning the moth could make its Texas debut in the next year or two, with potentially devastating effect on the state's official plant.

advertisement

"It has already decimated a number of rare species of prickly pear," said Jim Bergan, the Nature Conservancy's Texas director of science.

The cactus moth is an invasive species from South America that has been found as far away as Australia and Africa. It was discovered in Florida in 1989 and has been spreading ever since — making it as far west as Alabama. It was also recently discovered in Mexico's Isla Mujeres, an island off the coast of Cancun

Programa Nacional para el Control, Monitoreo y Erradicación de la Palomilla del Nopal *Cactoblastis cactorum* en México



Fotos: Susan Ellis, forestryimages.org /TNC

Propuesta presentada al

SINASICA

Sistema Nacional de Sanidad, Inocuidad y Calidad Agropecuaria y Agroalimentaria.

Febrero 2007

México





TNC Strategies

- With direction from the Invasive Species Initiative and our USDA agricultural government relations staff, secure permanent funding of at least \$1.5 Million for the APHIS sterile moth release program
- Work with key congressional representatives to ensure permanent funding allocation of \$1.5 million per year.
- Continue support for Education and Outreach activities throughout the existing and potential range of *Cactoblastis*. Work with Laura Tyler and support her O&E efforts.
- Support efforts of our Mexico TNC staff (Ignacio March) to implement the *Cactoblastis* strategic plan in concert with SINASICA, nopal producers and other government agencies



TNC Strategies

- Request Department of Interior and OMB to support the volunteer sentinel monitoring network to support early detection and rapid response. We urge an appropriation of \$1 million/year for the USGS/Mississippi State cooperative agreement by FY09.
- Expand implementation of sentinel sites on TNC preserves throughout existing and potential range of *C. cactorum*.
- Convene a Cactoblastis workshop in Texas with producer groups, Texas Cooperative Extension, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Any
Questions?**

